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TRUTH ABOUT THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

BY SH. ABDUL HAKIM

From a close study of the Bible, it is evident that Jesus (peace be with him) did not at all expire on the Cross but was taken down from the Cross alive, and after this event he lived for many years to preach the Gospel to the Israelites and fulfilled his sacred mission.

Death-warrant of Jesus

Sentence rendered by Pontius Pilate, acting Governor of Lower Galilee stating that Jesus of Nazareth shall suffer death on the Cross was as follows :

In the year seventeen of the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar, and the 27th day of March, in the city of the holy Jerusalem Annas and Caiaphas being priests, sacrificators of the people of God—Pontius Pilate, Governor of Lower Galilee, sitting in the presidential chair of the praetory, condemns Jesus of Nazareth to die on the Cross between two thieves, the great and notorious evidence of the people saying :

1. Jesus is a seducer.
2. He is seditious.
3. He is the enemy of the Law.
4. He calls himself falsely the Son of God.
5. He calls himself falsely king of Israel.
6. He entered into the Temple followed by a multitude bearing palm-branches in their hands.

Orders the first Centurion, Quilius Cornelius, to lead him to the place of execution.

Forbids any person whomsoever, either poor or rich, to oppose the death of Jesus Christ.

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The witnesses who signed the condemnation of Jesus are :

1. Daniel Robani, a Pharisee.
2. Joannus Robani.
3. Raphael Robani.
4. Capet, a citizen.

Jesus shall go out of the city of Jerusalem by the gate of Struenus.

The original of this death warrant is in the Hebrew language but a translation in French was made by the Commissioners of Arts of the French Army, in the year 1810.

If it is admitted that he died on the Cross, as is believed by the present day Christians then the following prophecy remains unfulfilled :—

> "Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him saying, Master we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the Prophet : for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale ; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (S. Mathew 12 : 38-40)

It is an admitted fact that Jonah was alive when swallowed by the whale ; he remained in its belly for three days and nights and came out of it alive. How could death overtake Jesus before his entry into the heart of the earth if he was a true prophet? No doubt his so-called death on the Cross was only a swoon. He became unconscious like Jonah and was alive when laid in the tomb and came out of it alive according to his own prophecy. Otherwise the sign of Jonah is not given.

As Jonah remained ALIVE in the whale's belly so should the Son of Man remain ALIVE in the heart of the earth.

It was quite natural for the shipmates who "took up Jonah and cast him into the sea", to think that he could not escape death ; similarly the enemies of Jesus brought him to the Cross to put him to a sure death, and in their opinion he too could not escape it but the Mighty hand of God came to his rescue and

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saved him from death on the Cross, as it did in the case of Jonah.

We read in the Old Testament that a false prophet is soon put to death or he meets with an untimely and violent end.

> "But the prophet which shall speak a word presumptuously in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die." (Deut. 18 : 20)

Again it says that if a person dies by hanging, say on a tree or a scaffold, he becomes accursed of God. God's wrath is kindled against him and he is driven away from His presence. (Deut. 21 : 23).

To believe that Jesus died on the Cross would mean that he was a false claimant, and was cursed by God, and that his enemies were justified in what they did. Believe him a righteous servant of God and you will have to reject the story of his death on the Cross. In fact the words of the Master quoted above were fulfilled word by word, and Jesus Christ did not die on the Cross, as is evident from the Gospels.

The Holy Quran also supports the above mentioned prophecy and reveals the truth in the following terms :—

> "And their saying : surely we have killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of Allah ; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him but (the matter) was made dubious to them and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it, they have no knowledge respecting it but only follow a conjecture, and they know it not for sure." (Ch. vi. 157)

The Gospels contain clear testimony to the effect that Jesus Christ escaped death on the Cross, and the following facts reveal what actually occurred :—

(1) Before the day of his crucifixion Jesus Christ prayed for the whole night, weeping and crying, and with great distress of soul, for his safety from the accursed death on the Cross, and also asked his disciples and companions to pray for him, wakening them many a time from their sleep, to pray to God, so that He might turn that cup away from him. None would

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ever believe in God or in the validity of prayer if such a prayer goes un-answered.

> "And he was parted from them about a stone's cast and he kneeled down and prayed saying Father, if thou be willing remove this cup from me: Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done and there appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." (S. Luke XXII: 44-44)

Indeed we read (Heb. 5 : 7) that His prayer was GRANTED.

> "Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear."

(2) It seems that Jesus had a promise of Divine help and rescue from God to which he alluded while he spoke the words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me," on the Cross. What becomes of this promise if we take it for granted that he died on the Cross? God is indeed the best keeper of His promises?

(3) When the High Priests and Chiefs held a council to put Jesus to death and Pontius Pilate the Governor sat on the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message saying :—

> "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." (S. Mathew xxviii-19)

This dream shows that God desired to save Jesus from the clutches of the cruel Jews. If Jesus was destined to die on the Cross, this dream would certainly prove to be meaningless and no true Christian would be prepared to admit the futility of a vision, noted in the Scriptures.

(4) Jesus remained on the Cross for about three hours, but death by crucifixion was always tardy and a question of days. He could not die on the cross in so short a period, rather passed into un-consciousness and apprarently looked like a dead person. Even Pilate

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seems to have been reluctant to believe that death could have taken place so soon.

We are also informed by historians of that time that many a time crucified persons were brought back to life after being taken down from the cross.

> "And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead and calling unto him the Centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead" (S. Mark 15-44)

(5) It was a Jewish custom not to let the crucified person remain hung on the Cross over night when the next morning was a Sabbath day, unlike the custom of other nations who often kept the crucified person on the cross for eight or nine days, till death occurred.

(6) The bones of the two thieves who were crucified with Christ, were crushed, but his body was brought down untouched—Why? Does it not show that there was a secret understanding to save him and at the same time to satisfy the furious Jews? He was exhuasted by the scourging, became unconscious, and appeared like a dead man.

(7) When, the side of Jesus was pierced with a spear, blood came out and this was a clear sign of life. Had Jesus been really dead at that time the wound would not have bled at all as blood circulation ends completely with death.

(8) The Centurion declared him dead. It was done purposely. He was privately prepared by the disciples of Christ. Jesus was not buried like the two criminals who were hanged with him, but was handed over to a wealthy disciple of his, who took care of him and put him in a spacious room built in the side of a rock, in a garden outside the town, so that the fresh air, soothing medication, and tender nursing, might bring him back to consciousness. He was given a sleeping draught, to soothe his nerves and to mitigate his sufferings, brought on by the extreme anxiety at the sudden turn of events, against all his expectations and Divine promises of support.

(9) If he had really come to life after his death, there was no need to remove the stone from the mouth of the grave, thus giving rise to suspicions and doubts. The fact is, that under cover of darkness, his

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body was removed to a safe place where he was given rest and recovered from the terrible nerve shattering experience he had undergone on the cross.

(10) Mary, when she saw him, took him for a gardener (John 20 : 15), which shows that Jesus had disguised himself. This disguise would not have been required at all, had Jesus really risen from the dead. Why did he ask his people not to disclose the secret to any one ? What was he afraid of ? None could harm him if he had really overcome death.

(11) Jesus after the event of the Cross met his disciples, who on seeing him, were incredulous about his existence and supposed that they had seen a ghost, but Jesus assured them that he was the same body of flesh and bones. After resurrection a departed soul is granted a celestial body, but Christ denied his possessing any such body.

> "And as they spoke these things he himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they beheld a spirit, And he said unto them why are ye troubled ? And wherefore do reasonings arise in your heart ? See my hands and my feet that it is I myself : handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having" (S. Luke 24. 36 : 39)

It was in the same body that the disciples saw him with his wounds still green on him :—

> "And when he had said this he shewed them his hands and his feet" (S. Luke 24-40)

He still felt hunger like his disciples, and ate.

> "And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat ? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it and did eat before them." (S. Luke 24 41 : 43)

Indeed material food is not needed by the spiritual and celestial beings.

(13) Throughout his post-crucifixion appearance, Jesus was found concealing and hiding himself as if he was afraid of being discovered.

(14) Jesus Christ undertook a journey to Galilee with two of his disciples, walking side by side with him which shows, that he was fleeing to take refuge in that town. Had his object been to rise to heaven he

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would not have undertaken this journey to Galilee. Over-credulous and superstitious men can believe in the possibility of a body ascending to heaven, but an intelligent man who, in view of scientific and rational reasons, considers it impossible for an actual dead body to return to life, will see in the doctrine of ascension another Jewish superstition.

The Gospel completely clarifies this point by saying that "no man ascended up to the heaven but he that came down from heaven" (St. John 3 : 13). The world knows Jesus did not come down from heaven. He was born in Nazareth. In fact the term "ascension", religiously speaking, means an exaltation in God's esteem and favour. God's raising a human being physically to Himself implies, that the Divine Being is confined to a particular place. All the prophets are exalted. The exaltation of Jesus Christ, mentioned in the Holy Quran, is in that sense and in fact is a reply to the Jews, whose object was to make him die an accursed and ignominous death on the Cross.

Mark and Luke relate their own impressions about this doctrine of ascension, which they formed only from some false legends and not from the actual facts. Paul says in the first letter to the Corinthians.

(Chap. xv. v. 50)

> "Now this I say, brethren that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit in-corruption."

Even if it was a secret as to what happened on Mount Olive, the two disciples who were present there *i.e.*, Mathew and John do not, in their writings, utter a single word about the ascension of Christ to heaven, hence it is evident that from Mount Olive, Jesus departed to a distant place where the remnants of the ancestors of Israelites were inhabited.

In short all the above testimonies conclusively prove that Jesus did not die on the Cross, and was miraculously saved from the hands of his enemies, as has been the case with all other true prophets of God, in such circumstances.

As there is nothing in the whole history of Chris-

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tianity to show that the event of the Cross ever re-occurred during Christ's lifetime, the belief that Holy Jesus died on the Cross does not appear to be true according to the Bible and must be attributed to the false notion of the people of the time who were under the wrong impression, that Christ's death occurred on the Cross. The truth is that some of his disciples who knew the secret that Christ was taken down alive from the Cross, did not divulge it being afraid of his re-arrest.

In view of the circumstances mentioned above one cannot help believing that the holy Jesus DID NOT DIE ON THE CROSS. The theory of his death on the Cross is a clever fabrication of the Jews of yore who wanted to prove, that he was an Imposter and was consequently hanged on the Cross. It is an irony of fate that both the friends and foes of Jesus started believing in it. Is it not the greatest injustice ever done to any body on the earth ? To die on the Cross, according to the Bible, is to meet an accursed death which cannot be attributed to a holy person like Jesus of Nazarath. It is impossible that a prophet should die before accomplishing his mission, as it defeats the very object of his advent.

Therefore, in the name of justice and fairness to holy Jesus and the humanity at large I ask those who call themselves Christians to ponder over the doctrine of Crucifixion seriously, and for God's sake to refrain from entertaining such a blasphemous views in regard to the chosen one of God, as there is no greater injustice than this.

There is also strong historical evidence to show that Jesus had to leave his country and migrate to a distant place to collect the scattered sheep of the house of Israel, under the command of his Master (as has been the case with many other prophets) where he lived and preached among them, dying at the age of 120. His tomb is still preserved in Khan Yar Street, Srinagar, India.

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SECULARISM IN TURKEY AND ITS MEANING

(By John Kingsley Birge, Ph.D.)

[With acknowledgements to the *International Review of Missions*]

In the early days of the Turkish national state the leader, then called Gazi Mustafa Kemal, defended his reforms in terms of religious precedents and Islamic principles. The pictures of the National Assembly in those days showed a sprinkling of white turbans, indicating that religious leaders were prominent among the political crusaders of the new era. Out of defence to them and to the strong following which they represented, the Gazi cited instances from Islamic history to justify the separation of Caliphate and State in 1922. Later, when he advocated the setting up of statues to commemorate the leaders of the new Turkey, he did not defy Islamic feeling. He offered instead a long argument to show that Islam was not really opposed to the creating of art forms which represent the human figure. In those early days religious feeling was strong. Religious leaders had aided the new Nationalist movement and their prejudices had to be reckoned with. The strongest evidence of this fact was the article in the Constitution, adopted in April 1924, stating that the religion of the Turkish State was Islam.

But already the trend of affairs was turning in the direction of a gradual curtailing of the power of these religious leaders and of the ideals which ruled them. How swiftly steps then followed one on another is evident from the following catalogue of events.

In January 1924 Friday was made a day of compulsory rest as well as the day of special worship in the mosque—a subtle step apparently strengthening the sacredness of this day but actually a move in the opposite direction, toward changing the Holy day into a secular holiday. In February 1924 foreign schools were required to remove all religious symbols from their walls. Again this was a step which

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Muslims might approve. But it served only to win commitment to the principle that all schools were secular and that religion in them was out of place. In early March of that same year the Gazi addressed the National Assembly at length in an effort to show the necessity of a separation between Church and State. Two days later a bill was passed which abolished the Caliphate and exiled the royal family. At the same time the Ministry of Religious Affairs and of the Sheriat (Religious Law) was also abolished. Still more important, so far as ultimate influences were concerned, was the closing of the 'medrese's', the theological schools in which from the earliest days of the Ottoman State the religious leaders had been trained. To fill the gap thus caused a unified system of education was set up under a Ministry of Education. Thus came to an end the dual system of 'medrese', or school based on the Koran and its teaching, and the 'mekteb', or school in the western sense. The western type of school with secular and scientific teaching as its basis had won out and with this victory the new generation was on the way to being won to the Gazi's point of view.

In April 1924 the courts which applied the Sheriat law were abolished. In 1925 the many 'medrese' buildings of the country were officially turned over to the Department of education. In the 'Imaret' or soup kitchen section of one of them a fine museum was established. Others were used as dormitories. Some were made distributing centres operated by the 'Drop of Milk Society'. In still others athletic clubs were allowed to find headquarters, and at least one day-nursery. If should be noted that if this was secularization it was essentially a move back to the ancient and humane practice of Islam when a mosque was a social centre. In those early days the schools attached, like all schools, were religious. But there were hospitals, inns, soup kitchens and Koranic reading-rooms provided as well. The new secularization of 'medrese's' involved both a blow at the old religious training and also a victory for the welfare of the people.

In August 1925 one of the most dramatic sense in

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all the history of Turkish transformation took place when the Gazi appeared at the gates of the conservative interior town of Kastamonu, himself and his retinue wearing hats. In an address to the astonished crowd that had gathered to meet him he asked them to throw away their fezzes and put on the headgear of the west. To anyone who knew the Turkish mentality of those days, when the hat was almost universally regarded as the sign of an infidel this act of Kemal's was one of outstanding audacity. He risked his life. But his great prestige saved him and in November of 1925 the fez was formally outlawed.

In November of the same year all 'tekke's' and 'Zaviye's', lodge halls of the dervish orders, were formally closed and the use of technical terms such as 'baba' and 'shaikh', characteristic of old dervish loyalties, was forbidden.

The year 1926 was the year when western legal codes were adopted as a means of completely filling the vacuum caused by the doing away with the Sheriat or religious law. It was also the year when the first statue of the Gazi was erected at the famous Seragalio point in Istanbul, and this, within about a year, was followed with other statues in other cities, notably the Victory monument in Ankara. Unimportant as this erecting of statues may seem to the western mind, it involved a new departure in Muslim Turkey and represented a further weakening of ecclesiastical authority.

April 1928 saw a constitutional amendment which deleted the statement that the religion of Turkey was Islam. The oath of office for deputies in the National Assembly was also altered at the same time. Instead of swearing 'before Allah' they now were to 'swear on my honour'.

Then follows a period of years in which all these changes were allowed to take firm root in the practice of the people. In December 1934 a new law forbade the wearing of ecclesiastical garb outside mosques and churches. If this law prohibited the wearing on the streets of the long robes of Christian priests, it also forced the Muslim imam to wear a hat and to dress like

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a westerner when not engaged in his official mosque duties.

For a period of years the change of the weekly holiday from Friday to Sunday was agitated. The actual change came in May 1935 and by constitutional amendment in February 1937 the six principles adopted by the People's Party in 1935 were read into the constitution, among them the flat statement that the 'Turkish State is secular' (laik).

Not by formal law but by regulation, the use of religious lessons in Turkish public schools was dropped about the year 1929. On the closing of the medreses a theological department of the University of Istanbul was opened, but the number of its students dwindled from 287 in 1926-27 to ten in 1931-32, and the department was finally absorbed by the department of literature. Thus with no school in which to train religious leaders, with mosques often and dervish tekkes always allowed to fall into disrepair, with no religious instruction being given to children except in the home and, very imperfectly, by old-fashioned sermons in the mosques, it may be said that Turkish youth came to know less of Islam than do the children of almost any country about their own religion. Secularism has gone perhaps farther in Turkey than in any country of the modern world except pre-war Soviet Russia. If this is the fact, what about its meaning ?

First of all, the meaning is to be found in the reasons for the secularization. Gazi Mustafa Kemal, whom the whole world later came to know as Ataturk, faced with his leaders in 1923 the gigantic task of changing the dynamic Republic born out of the ashes of the effete Ottoman Empire into a modern civilized state. On the religious side three obstacles confronted them. One was the theology of orthodox Sunni Islam. However much exceptional leaders and one or two religious poets like Mehmed Akif may have tried to teach otherwise, the usual teaching of the religious leaders so emphasized the absolute sovereignty, the unconditioned power of God, that human initiative bent on radical reforms of any kind seemed like infidelity. A religious leader of wide influence once

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discussed this war with a friend from the west. Both agreed that war was bad, so bad as to be man's worst enemy. But when the westerner, thinking to encourage his Muslim friend, told of determined efforts in the west seeking so to rebuild society that wars might be prevented, the Muslim theologian strongly objected. War might be bad but Allah had created a world in which war existed. Only the unbeliever could try to remake the world. It was that attitude applied to malaria and disease of all sorts and to old-fashioned ways in general that Ataturk had to combat. Little wonder that he proceeded at first subtly and then openly to undermine the mentality that was so powerfully opposing all progress.

A second difficulty of a religious nature faced by the Republican leaders was the fact of widespread allegiance to dervish orders. More than a dozen different orders had lodges everywhere. They were the social club, the music hall and the emotional prayer meeting combined, of the common man. Each dervish swore obedience to his 'Shaikh', as the Grand Master of the lodge was called. Back in the days of the great reformer, Sultan Mahmud II, it had been dervishes who especially opposed his attempts at progressive ways. Even when such leaders were put to death the dervish belief in the power of departed saints fed the flames of revolt among the dervish followers. In spite of the fact that the greatest hope for a revived spiritual Islam still lies perhaps in the mystical life of which these dervishes were a part, it still appeared true in the days of Ataturk that, as an Ottoman put it to Ubicini in the first half of the last century, 'Depend upon it, our ministers are labouring in vain, and civilization will never penetrate into Turkey so long as the tekkes and turbes (tombs) remain standing'. The abolition, therefore, of the dervish orders was a necessary step without which a nation of undivided loyalty could never have been built.

And finally Atatruk faced as an obstacle in the religious life of his people the widespread superstition which was formally a part neither of orthodox Sunni Islam nor of the mystical life organized in dervish

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tekkes. But the leaders in these types of religious life encouraged rather than opposed the religious superstitions of the masses. 'Mashallah' signs over house doors and the same expression used in conversation were to keep away the 'evil eye'. Amulets were worn by the sick and the troubled, and the making of them was profitable for many a 'hoja'. 'Blowing' (ufuruk-culuk) was one of the common forms of healing and, although forbidden by law, is still believed in by many even of the enlightened. According to this custom a healer sitting in front of a patient goes into a trance, his body twitching as the spirit of Divine Reality in its essence falls as if in drops on the heart and nervous system of the healer, then gently the healer blows the 'breath of God' toward the patient. Many persons in Turkey to day will bear witness to the healing power of this strange practice. The praying beside the tombs of saints, the hanging of little rags on the trees near by the eating of the ashes of the saints or of dust from sacred places—all these practices, based on a conception of the universe and its behaviour so different from the scientific conception of the west, were widespread and deeply ingrained in Turkish mentality when Ataturk and his friends began their construction of a Republic in 1923. One can hardly see how much progress could have been made unless the minds of the new generation were completely weaned from all the superstitions. The doing away with the medreses, the allowing of the tekkes to go to rack and ruin before the eyes of the new generation, the weakening in every way of the influence over young people of the religious leaders trained in the old ways—all these were essential steps which by no means indicate hostility to true religion but which the religious abuses accumulated through centuries absolutely required.

To the western observer given these facts two points are to-day worth noticing. First, during this period when a destructive work has been accomplished so far as formal, organized religion is concerned, have there been any evidences of the spirit of true religion ? Second, what of the trend of formal religion after the

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passage of a score of years since the work of reform began ?

There is one point at which the spirit lying behind the development of the Republic bears so close a resemblance to one of the fundamental themes running through the whole Bible that all those interested in prophetic rather than merely formal religion should feel encouragement. Muslim, Christian, humanist, pious believer of any sort or unbeliever, if he be also a lover of mankind, has reason to note and rejoice in the fact that the principle of 'halkcilik', peopleism, amended into the Constitution in 1937 is a definite expression in the language of today of the spiritual attitude conveyed by that expression repeated so many times throughout the Bible, 'my people'. If the hymn 'When Wilt Thou Save the People ? O God of Mercy When ?' expresses something of the spirit of Old Testament prophecy at its best and of our Lord in all that He said and did, then in the emphasis put by Ataturk on 'the people' believers in true religion find a basic and fundamental point at which they can rejoice, and definitely one social force with which they can wholeheartedly cooperate. Who can say that the revelatory activity of the living God has not been revealing His spirit to the Turkish people in the reforms which have been inspired by that so Biblical ideal of 'Halkcilik ?

Let us look at what this emphasis of Ataturk has wrought. Perhaps no one can appreciate the development unless he had known something of the spirit of the old Ottoman Empire. H. G. Dwight's classic story, *The Leopard of the Sea*, is almost a parable of the neglect felt by the Ottoman rulers of the masses of the people. The Sultan and the ruling class took it for granted that the people of Anatolia existed to be exploited. Enough of that spirit has continued to-day. The millennium has not come in a generation in Turkey any more than in a few centuries in America. But the following brief outline shows a spirit at work, a spirit more fundamentally religious than the dried bones of the old formal 'religion'.

The turning toward the people began when that

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flag was put over the desk of the presiding officer in the first Nationalist Assemblies bearing the insignia 'Sovereignty Belongs to the Nation'. The study began before and during World War I by the sociologist Ziya Gok Alp, seeking to discover and exploit a knowledge of the national past with special emphasis on the Turks, that, is the commonpeople as against the Ottomans or persianized and arabicized gentry of the capital, was continued and formally made a principle of the Republic under the name 'Halkcilik', literally to be translated as Peopleism. Under this ideal Ataturk sought to re-write history in terms of the human achievement of the ancient past. The language and folklore of the common people were investigated. The letters with which the nation's language was written were changed in order that all the people might the better learn to read. The foreign words that had come in under Arabic and Persian influence were cast out wherever possible and words in use by villagers or adapted from the common everyday language of the people were submitted. Peoples' Homes were opened by the hundreds all over the country. Education and entertainment were thus brought to as many as possible of the adults as well as the children. The most strenuous efforts have been made to build new schools and to prepare sufficient teachers so that the constitutional provision requiring universal education might be actually practised. The use of old 'medrese' buildings in modern, socially useful ways has been another expression of the same impulse. In no respect has the genuine spirit of working for all the people been more conspicious than in the reforms affecting the life of women. In 1934 the Constitution was amended to permit woman to vote and to sit in Parliament. But long before that the doors of equal opportunity on every side, in education, in social life and in all the professions, had been thrown open to women.

The secularization programme has been qualified by a paralleled tendency in formal religion toward nationalization so that the people might add understanding to faith. Between 1924 and 1928 eight

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translations of the Koran into Turkish were published and, following the adoption of new Turkish letters, one of them, with a commentary, in eight volumes. In the early months of 1932, under the Gazi's personal direction, Koranic translations were intoned in the mosques, and since that time the law has required that the call to prayer be given always in Turkish.

These latter reforms suggest that the policy of seeking the welfare of the people, basically religious as that is, has extended into the realm of formal religion. Secularism, which originally sought to break the bonds which in a measure enslaved the people, has by that same motivation turned somewhat in the direction of popular interpretation of formal religion, and to-day the Office of Religious Affairs is seeking ways and means of reviving a trained Islamic ministry. But the emphasis on Peopleism, so prominent in the reforms of the Republic, has definitely taken root and, among the younger generation especially, is going to prove the criterion by which any attempt at future religious revival is going to be judged.

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LETTER TO A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY

From

The Ahmadiyya Movement, Sierra Leone Branch, P. O, Box No. 11. Bo. Sierra Leone, 29th February, 1945.

To

The Anglo-American Education Mission, Freetown.

Gentlemen,

I learn from the Sierra Leone "Daily Guardian" of February 24, 1945, that in your capacity as the Jackson Davis Mission, you have come to West African shores to make a study of Education, Agriculture and Rural life out here.

It is a pity that at present I am staying far away from Freetown and therefore cannot have the privilege of visiting you personally; however, I take this opportunity to send you the following few lines of mine, to introduce to you the Mission of which I am the present head in this colony, and hope that they will be read with due consideration and interest.

Although the introduction of our Mission to you does not concern the main purpose of your visit to this coast, but as we firmly hold that the afore-mentioned Mission is the only religious body that is capable of solving all spiritual, social and economic problems facing the world to-day, I feel that I should not miss this opportunity to convey to you a brief summary of the heavenly Message of this Mission, partly through this letter, and partly by offering you some booklets and pamphlets.

I am representing the Ahmadiyya Movement in this colony which is the only active and organised missionery body that stands for Islam throughout the world to-day. In other words this Movement is nothing more nor less than the true and real Islam. It was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Massiah and Mahdi, (Peace be on him) in 1889, and its object is the propagation of Islam and unification of all nations, races and creeds in universal brotherhood and equality.

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The following are some of the most outstanding features of this Movement :—

1. Of all the religions it is Islam alone that teaches its followers toleration and broadmindedness. Although under the influence of narrowminded but powerful Christian Missionary propaganda Islam and Mohammad (Peace and blessings of God be on him) are misunderstood by the West in this connection, but anyone studying Islamic history and teachings through neutral glasses will certainly realise that Mohammad (Peace and blessings of God be on him) practised the greatest toleration for religious sentiments and that wars fought by him were absolutely defensive and under unavoidable circumstances. The Holy Quran says : "Permission to fight is granted to those who have been unjustly expelled from their homes, simply because they said Allah is their Lord. And if God would not prevent some people from their cruelties by means of others, all Monastries, Synagogues, Churches and Mosques in which God is greatly worshipped would be razed to the ground." The object of Muslim wars, therefore, was to secure religious freedom for all whether Jews, Christians or Muslims.

2. Absolute and uncompromising monotheism is the central teaching of Islam : "La-Ilaha Illallah Mohammadur-Rasululla." There is none worthy of worship but One and the Only God and Mohammad is His prophet." This is the most important doctrine of Islam. Furthermore Islam helps to establish a permanent relationship with God and to realize Him during our earthly life as our Helper in all our affairs and undertakings.

3. Islam requires belief in all the prophets and spiritual guides including Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Karishna, Buddha, Confucius and Zoroaster. Islam represents the completion of the mission of all the prophets from the earliest dawn of history : that in fact the prophets of God came with one and the same mission. Thus Islam establishes peace between all religions.

4. The Quran, the Muslim Scripture— the word of God, was revealed to the Master-prophet Mohammad

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over thirteen hundred years ago and has been preserved intact without the slightest change. There are numberless Muslims who know the entire Book by heart. It is an inexhaustible mine of spiritual truths which satisfies the needs of all people of all countries.

5. The establishment of true democracy and universal brotherhood without discrimination of caste, creed, colour or country is the unique and unrivalled distinction of Islam. Islam has not only propounded but fulfilled and realized the splendid principles of democracy into the life and action of human society.

6. Following are a few of the distinctive features of Islam :—

(*a*) Libration of women by establishing the equality of both sexes, safe-guarding their rights and liberties and raising their status.
(*b*) Absolute veto on all intoxicants.
(*c*) Solution of economic problems.
(*d*) The furnishing of humanity with the noblest practical ethics.
(*e*) The promotion of science and education.

7. Following are some of the obligatory duties of Islam :—

(*a*) Five daily prayers.
(*b*) Fasting in the month of Ramadhan.
(*c*) Fixed almsgiving and charity.
(*d*) Pilgrimage to Mecca once in one's lifetime, provided circumstances allow.

8. According to Islam life after death is the continuation of life on earth. Heaven and Hell being right from here Heaven is eternal and everlasting while Hell is only temporary. Hell is as a hospital treatment for the human soul which, as soon as it is cured, goes to Heaven. Heaven is the attainment of a life of everlasting progress and complete joy and happiness through union with God and by the development of the fine spiritual qualities and the unlimited capacities that have been implanted in man.

It remains to be added that at present under the leadership of Hazrat Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, the illustrious son of the Holy Founder of the Movement whose headquarter is Qadian, Punjab, India in

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addition to thousands of branches in India, scores of Ahmadiyya Missionaries are enthusiastically working in all parts of the globe.

In West African British Colonies the work of the Movement is particularly satisfactory, where English, Arabic and Islamic religion are taught in recognised assisted and unassisted schools. Hundreds of Mosques have been built or recognised according to local conditions.

In Sierra Leone too, although the Movement has very recently been established and is comparatively very young yet, by divine grace the work is being extended and securing success day by day. Many missionary headquarters have been founded throughout the Protectorate along with seven well-equipped schools where about 400 children are educated in Arabic as well as all the secular subjects. In addition, thousands of books and leaflets in English and Arabic are being distributed. The most remarkable thing to note about our Sierra Leone Branch is that it is more or less independent financially and the work is being carried out by means of local funds and monthly contributions that its members offer.

In the end, in order to add more to your knowledge of the Ahmadiyya Movement, I offer you the following books and leaflets and hope that you will peruse them at least once from beginning to end.

(*a*) Ahmadiyya Movement 3
(*b*) Why I believe in Islam? 3
(*c*) The Muslim Sunrise, 1944, No. 3 3
(*d*) Do you want to know? 3
(*e*) How to save the world? 3
(*f*) The tomb of Jesus in India 3
(*g*) Jesus has come 3

Should you feel inclined to make further enquiry concerning Islam I assure you that I will be too pleased to reply.

Before closing, I bid you welcome on behalf of the Ahmadiyya Community of Sierra Leone Branch, and wish you success, prosperity and safe journey to your mother lands.

Yours truly,
Sd. M. M. Siddique,
Ahmadiyya Missionary Incharge.

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THE DOCTOR OF ORIGINAL SIN

Christians regard sin to be innate in human nature. Adam sinned and fell and so by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Sin was imputed to us all as our necessary heritage, and we cannot escape punishment under Divine justice unless this sin be atoned for. And this can only be effected by one of immaculate nature, namely God. Thus the entire edifice of Christianity rests on the doctrine of inheritance of sin. But the question arises, is the entire race of Adam tainted or only a few generations? The Bible is very clear on this point. We read :—

"Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God-visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exodus 20 : 5)

"The Lord is long suffering, and of great mercy for giving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations." (Numbers 14 : 18)

The Lord is "longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression", what a beautiful description of the Deity. In the above passages we are told that He visits the iniquity of 'one' upon the children only unto the third and fourth generation and no further. Sin therefore cannot be visited beyond the third and fourth generations and subsequent generations are free from the penalty of sin and do not stand in need of the "Blood of the Lamb" for redemption.

The Holy Quran has plainly rejected the doctrine of original sin. Adams' fault according to that Holy Book was not intentional and no sin could be attributed to him on that ground.

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Mark the following verse of the Holy Quran :—
"And certainly We gave a commandment to Adam before, but he forgot ; and we did not find in him any determination to disobey". (20 : 115)

Adam according to the Book of Islam prayed for mercy and God came to his help and showed him the way of salvation. We read :—

"Adam learnt some (repenting) sentences from his Lord and turned to Him ; verily He accepteth repentance and is Merciful" (2 : 37)

Adam repented. His fault that was due to forgetfulness was forgiven, and he was reconciled to his Lord, the Acceptor of repentance, the Merciful. His unintentional fault ended with him, and cannot be visited upon his children.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Yoga of the Happy Home, by Swami Dharma Theertha, Happy Home Institute, 24-B Daryagunj, Delhi. Rs. 2-8.

The Secret of Hindu Sangathan, by Swami Dharma Theertha, Hindu Missionary Society, Krishnanagar Lahore Re. 1.

Enemies of Indian Freedom, by Swami Dharma Theertha, Happy Home Book Depot, Krishnanagar, Lahore Re. 1.

Swami Dharma Theertha is the well-known author of **The Menace of Hindu Imperialism**, a work of outstanding importance for those of our Hindu brothers who might desire to study the stranglehold which outworn social and religious forms have had, and still continue to have upon the Hindu mind. In the interests equally of India's struggle for Independence as well as her great spiritual yearnings, Swami Dharma Theeratha is carrying on a crusade against the Caste system and that Brahman dominance which this system was designed to perpetuate.

The message of this able writer and fearless thinker is simple, clear and convincing.

Blind faith in age-old myths and superstitions is not religion, nor can any true religious feeling base itself on "Untouchability." India must get rid of these curses, if at all she is to be free politically and free to rediscover her spiritual soul.

In the three books under review this message runs through every page and leaves a lasting impression on the mind.

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